

Perspectives on Writing for Peer-Reviewed Publication

Prepared by
UAMS Office of Grants and Scientific Publications

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INDISPENSABLE MANUSCRIPT PUBLICATION RESOURCES

[AMA Manual of Style, 10th ed.](#) Online edition.

[Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th ed.](#) Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

[Uniform Requirements](#) for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publications. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

[Instructions to Authors in the Health Sciences](#) (University of Toledo Mulford Health Science Library) — These pages link to websites that provide instructions to authors for over 6,000 journals in the health and life sciences. All links are to "primary sources," that is, to publishers and organizations with editorial responsibilities for the titles.

Perspectives on Scientific Writing

[The Science of Scientific Writing](#). By George D. Gopen and Judith A. Swan. *American Scientist*, November-December 1990.

Most people assume that scientific writing is often hard to read because of the complexity of scientific concepts, data, and analysis. But that's not necessarily the case. The difficulty of scientific writing, Gopen and Swan argue, often stems, not from the complexity of the subject or substance of the writing, but from the *poor rhetorical technique used to structure the information in order to communicate it*.

This work offers some very useful tools for writers to analyze their writing to see whether it accomplishes what they intended and, hopefully, to improve the clarity of their writing. Rhetoric has to do with the technique and rules of using language effectively. The rhetorical principles that Gopen and Swan propose are based on the concept of reader expectations, which recent work done in the fields of rhetoric, linguistics, and cognitive psychology has helped define. In their work, Gopen and Swan "demonstrate a number of rhetorical principles that can produce clarity in communication without oversimplifying scientific issues."

If there is one quotation from the article that sums it up, it is this: **"If the reader is to grasp what the writer means, the writer must understand what the reader needs."**

The following two articles were written by followers of Gopen and Swan's approach:

[Scientific Writing as an Art and as a Science](#). By Robert C. Goldbort. *Journal of Environmental Health*, 2001.

[Recipe for a Quality Scientific Paper: Fulfill Readers' and Reviewers' Expectations](#). By Yaoqi Zhou. Center for Computational Biology and Bioinformatics, Indiana University School of Medicine, 2007.

[Riding Out Rejection: How to Navigate the Choppy Waters of Scientific Publication](#). By Kate Yandell. *The Scientist*. March 1, 2015.

[10 Tips on How to Write Less Badly](#). By Michael C. Munger. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. September 6, 2010.

[Right Your Writing](#). By Bob Grant. *The Scientist*. November 1, 2009.

[The Results Are Not Perfect](#). By A. Jay Block. *Chest* 1999.

Perspectives on Manuscript Preparation

Highly Recommended for Preparation of Biomedical Papers

[Organizing the Biomedical Paper](#). By Marianne Mallia. Texas Heart Institute, Houston, Texas.

[Checklists for Writing a Biomedical Paper](#). By Marianne Mallia.

[Preparing Manuscripts for Submission to Medical Journals: The Paper Trail](#). By H. Gilbert Welch. *Effective Clinical Practice*, May/June 1999.

The following articles come from a variety journals. Because each approaches the topic of manuscript preparation from the point of view of a different discipline, these articles can yield valuable insights regardless of one's particular discipline.

Advances in Health Sciences Education

[Advice for Young Investigators: Historical Perspectives on Scientific Research](#). By Martin Donohoe. May 2003.

Academic Medicine

[Scientific Writing of Novice Researchers: What Difficulties and Encouragements Do They Encounter?](#) By Jatin Shah, Anand Shah, and Ricardo Pietrobon. April 2009.

American Journal of Roentgenology

[Ten Principles to Improve the Likelihood of Publication of a Scientific Manuscript](#). By James M. Provenzale. May 2007.

[Writing It Up: A Step-by-Step Guide to Publication for Beginning Investigators](#). By Mark A. Kliewer. September 2005.

Catheterization and Cardiovascular Intervention

[Approach to Manuscript Preparation and Submission: How to Get Your Paper Accepted](#). By Morton J. Kern and Heidi N. Bonneau. March 2003.

International Journal for Quality in Health Care

[Writing for Publication — A Guide for New Authors](#). By Nancy Dixon. 2001.

Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics

[Submitting Manuscripts to Biomedical Journals: Common Errors and Helpful Solutions](#). By Claire Johnson and Bart Green. January 2009.

Links last updated July 13, 2015